382 so-and-so has died. Hours before his actual death, people everywhere know that a certain person is on his deathbed and that his death is imminent.

[100] If the witch doctor is up to his tricks of duping the silly Negro, people everywhere around know just what nonsense he is performing at what moment.

The White announces his morning and midday orders by means of the lokole and tells his workers when they may cease work for the day by the same means.

In the mornings and evenings and in the case of wet weather, the lokole carries especially far, but in the full sun it is not so effective.

202 534 The lokole is a large block of wood which is split down the middle for almost the whole of its length, and the inside part is carefully hollowed out. The lokole has the shape of an extra long, open mussel shell although, in general, the outside edges are flattened out.

322 The making of lokole is the trade of a certain person, and some Negroes are well-known for the lokole they have made.

Only four kinds of wood are suitable for the making of a lokole. [99] These are (1) Bokungu; (2) Likoso; (3) Bolondo; and (4) Isi. The last [100] is the most excellent kind of wood and the one used by the Mongo Negro to manufacture his "ngula" (red dye) with which he smears his body for even the least important event that occurs in his village. The Isi is probably a species of redwood. The Mongo Negro makes 322 five different lokole: (1) Ingonga, small in shape; (2) lokole ja lomali, 534 medium size; (3) bongungu, large lokole. These three are all like the one described above. They are struck with sticks (bocolo) from the "momambo" tree (umbrella tree). (4) Bonkuka is the large, high lokole that is struck with two sticks to the ends of which are attached several balls of caoutchouc. The sound of these lokole carries for the greatest distance. (5) Ngomo is the large, oblong, upright dance lokole. This lokole is simply a large, oblong piece of wood, completely hollowed out, decorated a little, about 1,25 meters high, and covered at the top with a piece of dried antelope or leopard skin. It is struck with the fingers and the palm of the hand. This lokole is the well-known tom-tom, still used by the Negroes on the steamboats to announce their arrival in the villages along the river.

202 198 And now something about lokole language.

The beat of the lokole varies, and it is by this means that the Negroes [101] understand the different words. The tempo varies also.

The White hears only the difference in tempo, nothing more. The Negro miles away understands what is being telephoned.

The lokole language consists chiefly of metaphors and is thus not intelligible to any White in the whole of the Congo. The Negroes are proud of their invention and also pleased that the White, who otherwise can do everything, is not able to understand their lokole.

Every man has his own name (nkombo) on the lokole with which he makes himself known. Because such a name often covers several lines of script, chiefly expressed in metaphors giving facts of the public life of the Negro concerned, it would be a physical impossibility for a White to master the lokole language in the way a Negro does. Actually, not even all Negroes understand the art of beating the lokole.

[962] The women have a general name; beating the lokole is only for the men; and no woman understands the art. The women understand what is being broadcast when the lokole is beaten, but they cannot beat it themselves. Moreover, they would be ashamed to attempt it; this is no task for a woman, and they would be laughed at. The lokole name, or nkombo, of the woman is as follows:

Bali la solombo boselobi lisolo, boselobi tombelako, tond' ol' inumu, bofambe eka lisala.

"Women in numbers, worked the garden, prepared much to eat, consisting of bananas, to eat out of the garden."

A White, personally, has no nkombo of his own on the lokole, but to announce the arrival of a White in a village, the following is spread around far and wide:

Loloma ja lifeka feka, esongo etsnaka nhola.

"The bat flies about everywhere, the pin wounds the nails of the feet."

With "the bat flies about everywhere" is to be understood the government agent who goes from village to village collecting the taxes. "The pin wounds the nails of the feet" means that, just as [724] the Negroes go on the warpath with sharp pointed sticks dipped in poison to wound the enemies' feet, the government agent is always on his rounds with his rifle, ready for the fray.

The nkombo of the Catholic missionary is as follows: [102]

(1) Bamele mele ba nkanga; (2) bofala boki ndaki lisako nda lokombo; (3) etafe bolo; (4) benanga belendaka la mperu.

Bonsele osele be okonga. "The one always screaming who is followed into the high grass, the strong branch, the districts go along with the priest (Father).

1. The missionary is seen here as a witch doctor (bonsele osele be okonga is a general lokole name for the Negro witch doctor), who, like the Negro doctor, is looked upon as a doctor and a priest.

2. Bofole boki ndeki lisako ude lokombo [etc]. The priest, because he is always seeking converts everywhere, is here compared with an envelope which, when it is followed, runs around and around in the high grass.

3. Etale bole. The missionary is here compared with a strong branch. He is strong because he is influential and highly regarded by the Negroes.

4. Bonanga bekondeka la mpeny. The districts all go along with the Father (priest). They all follow his instructions.

The okombo of the Protestant Anglican missionary is as follows:

Bofonga wombole bonanga bono okonda l'Englow.

"The fishing net is spread out; the country goes along with the Englishman."

In the same way as the fishing net cordons off a part of the river and everything is caught in it, so all the people go along with the Englishman. The Protestant Anglican missionary was in this district before the arrival of the Catholic missionary, so this okombo refers, of course, to this period. Since the arrival of the Catholic missionary, the situation has changed completely in this district.

These few examples give an indication of the difficulty in understanding the lokole language.

In addition, the Negro makes a few chairs, the most important of which is the lyeko la mpaka, the chair for the elder, a three-legged affair with two props under it, topped with a piece cut of the umbrella tree; into this the elder can throw himself as lazily as he wishes.

Then there is the so-called ebonga, a little stool chopped out of a block of wood with the native axe. This is finished off attractively with an emmwa, a small paring chisel, and the seat is decorated around the edge with studs which have been bought in some factory or other.